

DOMESTIC CRIMES

Domestic crimes include all offenses committed against family members, spouses and ex-spouses, roommates, and romantic partners and ex-romantic partners. Underreporting is a serious problem when it comes to domestic crimes (domestic violence experts estimate that the police department receives a report for only 33 percent of domestic crimes), so the reliability of these figures is uncertain.

Categorical Breakdown of Domestic Incidents

Most Serious Offenses	Total Reports 2003	% of Total Domestic Reports
Dispute/Disturbance with No Physical Abuse	355	35%
Simple Assault	219	22%
Aggravated Assault	88	9%
Violation of a Restraining Order	132	13%
Threats to Commit a Crime	67	7%
Malicious Destruction of Property	14	1%
Housebreak	18	2%
Harassing or Obscene Telephone Calls	23	2%
Larceny	27	3%
Murder	1	.1%
Harassment	20	2%
Auto Theft	7	1%
Annoying and Accosting	2	.2%
Robbery	5	.5%
Kidnapping	3	.3%
Rape	4	.4%
Check Forgery	13	1%
Indecent Assault	3	.3%
Stalking	2	.1%
Total	1,003	100

A majority of domestic calls to which officers respond to involve no crime—simply a loud argument, classified as a “domestic dispute.” In 2003, these calls made up 35 percent of all domestic reports. While not technically a crime, these domestic disturbances can still be a form of abuse, and they may escalate into more serious offenses if they go unaddressed.

The second most common domestic incident, also accounting for 22 percent of the total, is “simple assault” (assault without a weapon and with no serious injury). Aggravated assaults make up another 9 percent.

While the police are often first to be called for assistance in many crimes, in domestic violence this is not always the case. Victims of abuse often seek assistance from a local battered

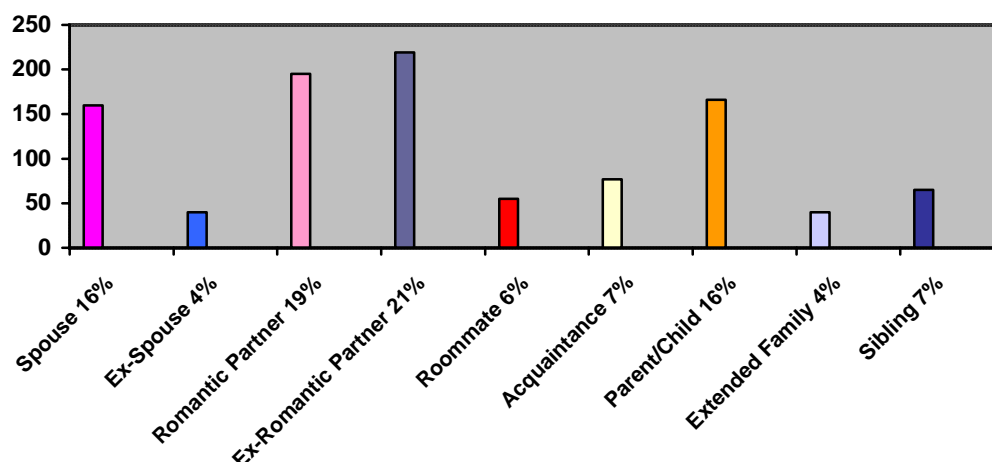
women’s shelter, a court, a hospital, or a friend before calling the police. Through the initiative of making Cambridge a “Domestic Violence Free Zone,” advocates of battered women and the police are increasing the awareness and education of domestic violence in our community. Domestic violence crosses all socio-economic, racial, ethnic, religious, sexual-orientation, and age boundaries. What analysis has identified, however, is that we respond to more calls in communities where individuals live in close quarters, and where neighbors contact the police for assistance. This community responsibility is what not only the “Domestic Violence Free Zone,” but also Community Policing strive to attain: when we as a community are concerned about our neighbors’ safety as well as our own, we will have a safer community.

DID YOU KNOW?

The National Crime Prevention Council, better known as the "McGruff, Take A Bite out of Crime" program, has recognized the Cambridge Domestic “Violence-Free Zone” as one of its top "50 Strategies to Prevent Domestic Crimes." Selected from thousands of programs sponsored by the most progressive non-profits, law enforcement agencies and grassroots community groups, the Cambridge initiative was singled out for its long-term citywide approach to preventing the nation's fastest-growing crime. "Here in Cambridge, we decided to involve the entire city government in a ten-year campaign to influence how people think of and act on domestic violence," said Nancy Ryan, Director of the Women's Commission. "With the support of the City Manager, the Cambridge Health Alliance, the Police and School Departments, we have begun to work with employees and community groups to challenge the acceptance of violence in families and relationships."

-For more information regarding domestic violence, please go to <http://www.cambridgepolice.org>

Domestic Violence by Relationship Category for the year 2003



Clearly, incidents occurred most often between romantic partners or ex-romantic partners (40%), and between spouses or ex-spouses (20%). A disturbing trend observed in 2002, which continued this year, was the significant rise in reporting of disputes within the family. Twenty-seven percent of the incidents reported were due to inter-family disputes.

If You Are a Victim of Domestic Violence

You are not alone, but please understand that domestic abuse generally gets worse and occurs more frequently when victims do not seek help. There is help available, either through the Cambridge Police Department's Domestic Violence Unit or through a local battered women's shelter. At the very least, seek help from a family member or friend, and create a safety plan for you and your children.

IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS:

Cambridge Police Department's Domestic Violence Unit..... 349-3371

Shelters:

Transition House (*shelter in Cambridge*) 661-7203

Renewal House (*shelter in Boston*) 877-785-2020

Counseling:

Respond (*shelter in Somerville*)..... 623-5900

Dating Violence Intervention Project (*teen dating violence*) 868-5401

Legal Services:

Community Legal Services Center 661-1010

Children who have witnessed domestic violence and/or victims:

Community Legal Services Center..... 354-2275

Elder Abuse Services and reporting.....800-922-2275

Battered Lesbians and Bisexual Women Project.....695-0877

Gay Men's Domestic Violence Project.....800-832-1901

Greater Boston Legal Services.....800-323-3205

If You Are an Abuser

Learn to recognize your behavior for what it is. If you assault your spouse, romantic partner, children, or other family members, you need to seek help.

Likewise, if you insult, threaten, blame, feel you need to control your spouse or romantic partner, or destroy things during arguments, you should seek assistance. Your behavior may escalate into violence.

THERE IS HELP FOR MEN WHO ABUSE:

Emerge 547-9879

Common Purpose..... 597-7230

Both of these services provide counseling and treatment for abusers.

Remember:

- You are responsible for what you say or do.
- Your spouse or partner did not make you hit her or him.
- You can change the way you act.
- There is no excuse for abuse.

UNDERSTANDING THE SYSTEM

Police Response to Domestic Violence Calls

An incident occurs



911 (police) is called



A police/incident report is taken



→If the victim is assaulted and the batterer is at the scene s/he is arrested.



The case is assigned to the Detective's Unit

**If the report is taken during the day, a night detective is assigned and if the report is taken during the nights, a day detective is assigned.



The detective will then take the case to court or get a warrant issued depending on the seriousness and history of the incident (for instance if it is an ongoing problem).



Applying for a Restraining Order

Between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.:

During these times, a restraining order must be applied for at the Cambridge District Court on the 14th floor at the Victim Witness Office. This type of restraining order is called a Temporary Restraining Order and is good for ten days.

After 5:00 p.m., on a Friday night, on the Weekend, or on a holiday:

During these times, a restraining order must be applied for at the Cambridge Police Department. This type of restraining order is called an Emergency Restraining Order and is good until the next court business day, usually a Monday or the day after a holiday.

Once the Restraining Order is Issued

In order for the restraining order to be in effect, it has to be served in hand to the defendant. If the Temporary Restraining Order is not served it can be continued for another ten days.



Once one appears in court for the Temporary Restraining Order, the order can be granted for a year.



Once the year is up, one may have the restraining order granted for another year or ask to be granted a Permanent Restraining Order that will remain in effect indefinitely.

Going to Court

Once a detective is assigned to the case, s/he will file for a hearing or for a complaint in court:

*During a hearing, the defendant and the victim will be in the presence of a clerk magistrate. The detective assigned to the case will start the hearing by reading the police report that was taken and disclose any crucial information that was given to them in reference to the case. The victim will give their story, followed by the defendant. The clerk magistrate will decide whether there is enough to go forward with the complaint. This step is only for misdemeanor crimes, if it is a felony charge, it will automatically go to the next step.

* When a complaint is made, the defendant will appear in front of the judge. The judge will hear the victim's story and the defendant's before deciding if there is enough to go forward with an arraignment.

*During the arraignment, the judge will determine whether there is enough to charge the defendant with any crime(s). The defendant will have a 58A hearing that will determine whether s/he is a threat to society. If not, s/he will be released, but if so, s/he will be held until the trial date.

*The trial will be either by jury or bench and if the defendant is found guilty, s/he will have a sentencing hearing and then be sentenced. Once s/he is in jail, the victim in the case can be asked to be notified of a release date or other information they would want to know regarding the defendant, such as programs they are participating in.